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April 12, 2016

VIA OVERNIGHT MAIL

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Judiciary Committee
300 Capitol Avenue
Legislative Office Building
Room 2500
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Judicial Re-appointment of Superior Court Judge
Barbara Brazzel-Massaró

Dear Judicial Committee Members:

I am writing in support of the re-appointment of Superior Court Judge Barbara Brazzel-Massaró. In short, I strongly support Judge Brazzel-Massaró's re-appointment, as I have been extremely impressed by her intelligence, judicial demeanor, and extraordinary work ethic. Practicing lawyers and the general public are lucky that Judge Brazzel-Massaró has chosen a career in the public service.

By way of brief background about myself, after a federal judicial clerkship, I began an active employment and litigation practice with my law firm 18 years ago. During this time, for seven years, I served as a board member and then chair of the Stamford Board of Ethics. Thereafter, for the past approximately 4 years, I have served on the State of Connecticut's Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board ("CEAB"), the governing body of the Office of State Ethics. I also have been involved in various civic organizations, including serving as the Vice President of the Raymond E. Baldwin Inn of Court. I mention specifically the Inn of Court, because it is an organization of practicing lawyers and judges dedicated to civility in the practice of law, and I have occasionally been outspoken in expressing my belief that civility is a responsibility of the bench as much as the bar. My experiences as chair of the Stamford Board of Ethics, where I presided over contested evidentiary hearings, and as a member of the CEAB, where I have served on the equivalent of a jury hearing ethics cases, have also provided me with differing perspectives on the role and challenges facing our judges.

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In private practice, I have had several oral arguments before Judge Brazzel-Massaró. I also have represented the plaintiff in a lengthy jury trial presided over by Judge Brazzel-Massaró, and I represented the same client in a related insurance dispute, which included a bench trial. During all of these experiences, although I was not always on the winning side, I was always impressed by the careful attention that Judge Brazzel-Massaró gave to each matter. I also often noted to others that the judge was spending as much time as the lawyers ensuring that justice was served, often arriving at the courthouse very early in the morning in order to prepare for our matters so that she could avoid any unnecessary delays. I have never been involved in any trial where the judge worked so hard as Judge Brazzel-Massaró did during my trials with her. On the bench, she quickly evaluates the legal issues in dispute, but in my experience, she never prejudices matters, providing everyone with an opportunity to be heard before issuing her rulings. Equally important, she appropriately ensures that all lawyers and parties show respect to each other, and she models that respect from the bench, treating lawyers as respected colleagues with roles to play in the judicial system.

The jury trial that I mentioned above involved civil claims arising out of a violent home invasion, and the factual issues were hotly and bitterly contested by the parties. My client was the victim, and I was impressed by the caring manner that Judge Brazzel-Massaró showed to my client. I was equally impressed, and more surprised, however, that Judge Brazzel-Massaró displayed an equal amount of care and empathy for the defendant, for all counsel, and for the jury. Following criminal proceedings during which my client often felt that she had been ignored by the prosecutor and a different judge, she sought "justice" in this civil trial. Perceived justice was therefore extremely important, and Judge Brazzel-Massaró could not have more perfectly made it clear to all parties and the jury that her courtroom was a place where the law would be respected and applied carefully and fairly for all. Since that trial, I have often commented that I wish more judges displayed the qualities that seem to so naturally come from Judge Brazzel-Massaró.

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All participants in the Connecticut judicial system are fortunate that Judge Brazzel-Massaro has and continues to be willing to serve as a Superior Court Judge. I hope that she will be given the opportunity to continue her service. Please let me know if I can provide additional information by letter or in person.

Sincerely,


Daniel M. Young